

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

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R 242114Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6743

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E O 11652 NA

TAGS ETDR OAS CO

SUBJ: COLOMBIA SEEKS DIRECTORSHIP OF CIPE

1. MIN OF DEVELOPMENT INFORMED AMB THAT COLOMBIA HAD PROPOSED TO HE OAS SECYGEN THAT LEONEL TORRES, FORMER HEAD OF PROEXPO, BE DESIGNATED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTER AMERICAN EXPORT PROMOTION CENTER (CIPE). THIS POSITION, HE SAID, WOULD COME OPEN IN MARCH. SINCE MUCH DEPENDS ON SUPPORT OF MEMBER STATES, THE MIN SAID HE HOPED THE US WOULD SUPPORT THIS.

2. TORRES RESIGNED HIS POSITION AS HEAD OF PROEXPO JAN 22 TO SEEK THE CIPE SLOT AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE COUNCIL, AN INTER MINISTERIAL GOVT BODY, CHAIRED BY THE MIN OF DEVELOPMENT, DECIDED TO GO AFTER THE POSITION AND SELECTED HIM FOR IT.

3. LEONEL TORRES IS AN IMPRESSIVE AND EFFECTIVE OFFICIAL, WHO IS WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO THE EMB. HE IS A FORMER OFFICIAL OF THE IDB AND IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO TAKING OVER THE PROEXPO SLOT WAS ADVISOR TO THE MONETARY JUNTA, A KEY POSITION IN THE GOC ECONOMIC APPARATUS. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH. WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE A GOOD CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR CIPE.

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4. THE EMB'S UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CIPE

IS NAMED BY THE OAS SECYGEN IN CONSULTATION WITH CIAP, OR PRESUMABLY CIAP'S SUCCESSOR ENTITY. THE CURRENT INCUMBENT MARIO MANUS, AN ARGENTINE, HAS BEEN IN ILL HEALTH AND IS IN BA NOW. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS A THREE YEAR CONTRACT EXPIRING IN MARCH 77, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST YEAR TERMINATING IN MAR 75 IS PROBATIONARY. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND MANUS IS CONTROVERSIAL AND HAS AROUSED A GOOD DEAL OF IRRITATION AND ANTAGONISMS AMONG OTHERS, AND WE ASSUME THAT SOME OAS IN HOUSE DECISION MAY HAVE BEEN MADE TO REPLACE HIM IN MAR. WE DO NOT SEE ANY OTHER EXPLANATION FOR THE COLOMBIAN MOVE.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S INFO ON THIS SITUATION AND ITS VIEWS ON SUPPORTING TORRES. OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE SUPPORT THE COLOMBIAN REQUEST. IT IS FELT IMPORTANT BY THE GOC. SINCE WE SEEM TO BE ABLE TO DO SO LITTLE ELSE FOR COLOMBIA, DESPITE ITS MODERATION AND FRIENDLINESS TOWARDS US, THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE A GESTURE THAT WOULD NOT COST US MUCH, YET WOULD HAVE PAYOFFS FAR TRANSCENDING THE POSITION ITSELF. VAKY

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